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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

**NIC officials seek to trim budget**

Posted: Tuesday, Dec 02, 2008 - 10:19:17 pm PST

By MAUREEN DOLAN

Staff writer

Most recent holdback expected to cut \$475,000 from college's expenses

COEUR d'ALENE -- Officials at North Idaho College are exploring ways to further tighten the college's budgets in response to Idaho Gov. Butch Otter's order Tuesday to cut another 3 percent from state agency budgets.

"We are looking at all areas of the campus," said Rolly Jurgens, NIC vice president of administrative services.

The holdback is in addition to a 1 percent cut Otter ordered in September with a warning that further budget trimming would be likely before the end of the year.

Jurgens, acting as president while Priscilla Bell is on vacation, said the college's budget lost \$158,000 in September and with the most recent holdback, another \$475,000 will be slashed.

That includes nearly \$134,000 in funds from the college's professional-technical education budget.

For now, full-time, filled positions are not in jeopardy of being cut, but temporary and part-time staffing reductions are possible, he said.

They will be eliminating at least one, possibly two, vacant full-time positions.

Other budget cutting measures the college is considering include increasing class sizes where possible, reducing travel, training and capital expenses, and delaying equipment purchases and remodeling plans.

"We're taking a look to see if there are some things that can be reorganized, or are on the fringe of our mission statements," Jurgens said.

Otter gave state agencies until Monday to decide how they will make their cuts.

The governor also announced he would not be recommending raises for state employees in 2009.

The college has not determined whether raises for campus employees will be affected, although the governor's decision puts pressure on NIC to follow suit.

"We were asked to plan for this a while ago," said Christie Wood, chair of the college's board of trustees. "It's obviously going to impact some of our services."

Regarding the college's plan to move forward with the \$10 million purchase of the DeArmond Mill site property, Wood said while the trustees recognize the challenges in the state budget, the future needs of the college have not changed.

"We are in the process of finalizing our commitment for the purchase of the education corridor. The college is not using state funds to purchase the education corridor property nor are we cutting any programs," Wood said. "With this purchase we intend to expand programs to fit the needs of our five northern counties and provide economic development through educational opportunities."

#### FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

**No new education news stories posted online today.**

#### FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

##### **UI names engineering interim dean**

Staff report

Posted on: Tuesday, December 02, 2008

The University of Idaho's College of Engineering has a new interim dean.

Donald Blackketter, former chairman of the mechanical engineering department, took the reins Monday.

Blackketter is taking over for acting dean Howard Peavy, who has filled the position since former dean Aicha Elshabini stepped down in October.

Blackketter will stay on as interim dean through June 2010, at which time the college hopes to have a permanent dean to fill the position.

"But I'm going to treat it like a permanent job," Blackketter said. "I'm going to treat it like the dean's job."

Blackketter said his first priority as dean is to work with other deans and administrators to weather the state's most recent round of budget cuts. He also will take part in ongoing discussions of upcoming program cuts and enhancements.

He said he is optimistic by nature, and will try to work through adverse economic conditions facing the university and the state.

"I think there is a reason to be excited for the future, even in these tough times," Blackketter said.

Blackketter first came to the university in 1989 as an associate professor of mechanical engineering. He's been department chairman since 2005.

He was born in Moscow when his father was working on his master's degree in mechanical engineering at the UI.

#### FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

#### **Let students be last in line for a cost hike (Editorial)**

Jim Fisher

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

As states look for ways to deal with revenue shortfalls during an economic recession, and try to maintain their higher education systems without raising taxes, they must keep one principle in mind:

If taxpayers can't afford to shell out more for colleges and universities, students are less able to afford it.

What should be obvious to everyone, however, is somehow hardest to understand in the administrative offices of schools of higher education. In Idaho, administrators perennially seek to raise tuition well beyond the rate of inflation, succeeding far too often.

And sure enough, leaders of the state's four-year schools of higher education are now preparing to ask the State Board of Education Thursday for permission to seek tuition increases of more than 10 percent for 2009, the Idaho Statesman reports.

Boise State University President Bob Kustra tells the paper he does not yet know he will seek such an increase. But because he also doesn't know how much money the school will have after Gov. Butch Otter's spending holdbacks this year, and after legislators appropriate money to higher education early next year, he and other presidents want the flexibility to charge students much more.

They shouldn't get it. And no one explains why better than the current president of the state board, Milford Terrell.

"This is something that is happening nationwide," Terrell says of balancing higher ed budgets on the backs of students. "Why would you push this off on the kids when the kids are already struggling to get through school? Do they have any more money? I don't think so."

Thanks to recognition of that fact by Terrell and other board members, presidents have not been granted all the tuition money they have sought in recent years. But even without it, four-year college and university tuition has doubled in the past decade, rising from an average of \$2,343 to \$4,642, the Statesman says.

During most of those years, the nation's and the state's economies were doing well. But Idaho taxpayers were not asked to pay twice as much for higher education as they did before. Only students get such an increase.

This should not be read as a call for cuts to the higher education budget. Such cuts only retard future economic growth, and should therefore be avoided whenever possible.

But jacking up tuition must not be the way to avoid them. If someone has to pay more to keep college and university education whole, do not let it be those who can least afford it. - J.F.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

**No news education news stories posted online today.**

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

**Idaho colleges won't seek double-digit tuition increases**

The university and college presidents won't even consider them 'in these difficult times,' Kustra says.

BY BILL ROBERTS - broberts@idahostatesman.com  
Edition Date: 12/03/08

Students at Idaho's four-year colleges and universities can ease the grip on their wallets.

College presidents said Tuesday that they are not contemplating double-digit tuition and fee increases next school year to compensate for state spending cuts as the recession deepens.

A day earlier, the schools had planned to ask the State Board of Education for permission to possibly propose increases exceeding 10 percent, according to the board's agenda.

The presidents of the four schools met Tuesday and agreed to ask the State Board to pull that item off its Thursday agenda, said Bob Kustra, Boise State University president.

Preliminary board approval is required before colleges can even ask for increases above 10 percent for tuition and fees. But that approval doesn't mean schools would ask for that much, nor that the State Board would approve it.

"BSU is not going to that 10 percent because we don't think we can impose that kind of a price increase on our students in these difficult times," Kustra said. "It's not even going to be around 10 percent, as far as I'm concerned."

Kustra said Tuesday that he did not know where the board's agenda item originated. State Board administrators are looking into that.

Mike Rush, board executive director, agreed with the presidents' decision to ask the board to pull the agenda item.

"This is a very, very difficult time for people," he said. "They are going to have a hard time paying the money."

It's also a time when many people will need to go back to school for job retraining after being laid off, Rush said.

The agenda item was meant as a discussion-starter on fees this year, Rush said. "I don't think there was ever a proposal to raise fees or even a serious request to raise fees beyond 10 percent," he said. "It was an opportunity to have a discussion."

The fee discussion on Thursday is coming four days after Otter announced a 3 percent reduction in general-fund spending for the remainder of the fiscal year, on top of 1 percent he ordered in September.

The total reduction, 4 percent, will cost Idaho higher education \$11 million this school year.

Colleges say they need additional revenue to help make up some of the shortfall or they may have to eliminate some classes, postpone hiring faculty or delay new programs.

The schools include Boise State University, Idaho State University, University of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College.

Bill Roberts: 377-6408

## **Eagle Elementary School of the Arts to decorate Zions Bank Christmas tree**

- Idaho Statesman  
Edition Date: 12/02/08

Students from Eagle Elementary School of the Arts will make ornaments for Zions Bank's Christmas tree and receiving a cash donation to their school in return.

Throughout the state, elementary school students are participating in the annual "Lights On" tradition by making festive decorations to deck the halls of every Zions Bank office. Eagle Elementary School of the Arts students will decorate a tree, make ornaments and sing carols inside Zions Bank's Boise, Eagle and Chinden office at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Teachers, parents and Zions Bank employees will gather with the students in the branch's lobby for the "Lights On" ceremony. Zions Bank will present a \$150 donation to the school, and participants will then have refreshments.

The public is invited to visit the branch and see the decorated tree on display through the holidays.

## **Kuna student wins holiday card contest**

- Idaho Statesman  
Edition Date: 12/02/08

Brielle MacDonald, a fourth-grade student at Falcon Ridge Public Charter School in Kuna, was named the winner of the 2008 Holiday Card Contest, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna announced today.

"The Department's annual Holiday Card Contest is a great way to highlight the importance of arts in education," Superintendent Luna said. "We had hundreds of great entries this year, and I am proud of all the students who entered in this contest for their talent and creativity."

MacDonald's colorful painting of a snowman gazing at a snowflake will be featured on the State Department of Education's holiday greeting cards this year that are sent to schools, districts and others across the state. She will also receive a certificate.

Superintendent Luna also awarded second-place and third-place winners statewide in the 2008 Holiday Card Contest:

2nd Place winner: Krysta Kilmer, 6th grade, Webster Elementary School in Lewiston School District.

3rd Place winner: Michael Murphy, 5th grade, Centennial Elementary School in Lewiston School District.

The following students won the grade-level competition:

Kindergarten: Keaton Danielle Bascom, Orchards Elementary School in Lewiston School District.

1st grade: Wade Ahlers, Centennial Elementary School in Lewiston School District.

2nd grade: Ashlynn Valdez, Idaho Arts Charter School in Nampa School District.

3rd grade: Hailey Russell, Grangeville Elementary School in Mountain View School District.

4th grade: Brielle MacDonald, Falcon Ridge Public Charter School in Kuna.

5th grade: Michael Murphy, Centennial Elementary School in Lewiston School District.

6th grade: Krysta Kilmer, Webster Elementary School in Lewiston School District.

Congratulations to all the winners! Each student receives a certificate of recognition. The grand prize winner's drawing is posted online at [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/media\\_center/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/media_center/).

## FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

### **ISDB prepares for state cuts**

By Ben Botkin  
Times-News writer

The Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind stands apart from other schools - and not just in its services for students with special needs.

ISDB in Gooding is the only public school that's unable to tap into a fund to offset the impact of 4 percent state holdbacks ordered by Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter.

For ISDB, that means \$335,800 will be cut from its budget this fiscal year.

All other public schools won't lose a dime because of the holdbacks. Instead of losing \$60.7 million statewide from their budgets, the other schools' budgets are balanced with the Public Education Stabilization Fund, which was designed for tight financial times.

Mary Dunne, superintendent of ISDB, said the school is working hard to find cuts that will not impact the services students receive.



"We basically have to find a way to provide those services," she said.

Earlier plans to get a new school bus to replace one with high mileage are on hold. Outreach staff, who travel to provide services to students, are being encouraged to share a car with co-workers going to the same community. There are also going to be cuts in professional development for staff, Dunne said.

The school is also cutting back on plans to buy technical equipment, which included a color printer.

In the long term, ISDB might be able to tap into the stabilization fund when the state is hit with budget woes.

While not soon enough to make a difference for this round of budget cuts, there are talks between the governor's office and education officials about the problem.

"It is a concern and it is something we are aware of," said Jon Hanian, the governor's spokesman.

The school is currently under the oversight of the Idaho State Board of Education. To be eligible for the stabilization fund, ISDB likely would need to switch its governance system to be under the Idaho State Department of Education, which works with other public schools.

Dunne said she would need to look at any proposals for the school and its pros and cons before knowing if she'd support a change.

Luci Willits, chief of staff for the State Department of Education, said talks about the issue have been very preliminary, adding that more discussion is needed before a decision can be made.

Mark Browning, spokesman for the State Board of Education, said the issue is part of an ongoing discussion, with no formal proposals yet.

"Nothing has been developed and submitted," he said.

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### **Can Idaho's 4-year colleges stay competitive and accessible? (Editorial)**

Got a son or a daughter who's a high school senior and who gets B's or better in school? Then chances are your mailbox over the past year has been stuffed with letters from private and out-of-state colleges and universities interested in enticing good students to attend their institutions - often accompanied by offers of financial aid.

That's a formidable challenge for Boise State University, the University of Idaho and Idaho State University, as well as for Lewis-Clark State College and Idaho Falls' Eastern Idaho Technical College. Aside from being close to home, their biggest advantage has been that they could deliver a quality college education for less.

Maybe not for much longer.

Presidents of Idaho's public universities are laying the groundwork to request tuition or fee increases higher than the 10 percent allowed each year by the State Board of Education. The board is meeting in Nampa later this week.

The administrators say the rule change will allow them to generate more revenue, if necessary, to help offset ongoing state budget cuts imposed by Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter. On Monday, the governor ordered state agencies to cut another 3 percent in spending due to lagging state tax revenue. It follows a 1 percent holdback imposed in September.

Board policy bars universities from requesting tuition increases for full-time students of more than 10 percent. Make no mistake, that cap is in serious danger.

Do the math. The current higher education budget in Idaho is already spartan; next year's will be bleak. If the colleges and universities can't make up the difference in funding, instructional programs will be cut and faculty and staff will be laid off.

The College of Southern Idaho and the state's two other community colleges are in better shape, both because their tuition and fees are more competitive and because they receive some of their revenue from property taxpayers. But the laws of education economics apply in Twin Falls, Coeur d'Alene and Nampa too.

For BSU, ISU, the U of I, LSCS and EITC, the cause of the latest economic crisis goes back years. Rather than spend more taxpayer money on higher education year in and year out, successive Legislatures balanced by budget on the backs of Idaho college students. Student fees - a euphemism for "tuition" in Idaho - now make up a growing percentage of funding for Idaho colleges and universities.

And each time tuition goes up at Idaho's four-year schools, more students go home. That's one reason behind the growth of the state's community colleges over the past 20 years.

But there's a limit to how much of that gap CSI, the College of Northern Idaho and the College of Western Idaho can - or should - fill. Sooner or later, the Legislature and the State Board of Education are going to have to come to grips with the practical limits of tuition and fees in a state-supported higher education system that wishes to remain both competitive and accessible.

Unfortunately, such a big-picture decision isn't likely to happen soon enough. For the next year or two, students at Idaho's four-year schools are either going to be paying more, going to college someplace else - or not going to school at all.

## FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

### **State Delays Tuition Talks**

ISU president: No decision made on size of increase

BY YANN RANAIVO

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Idaho State University President Arthur Vailas said Tuesday that tuition was to be a topic at the upcoming State Board of Education meeting, but no conversation on increases was planned, let alone a specific number decided upon.

Earlier this week, news reports said the presidents of Idaho's four state universities would seek an increase beyond the maximum 10 percent allowed annually from State Board of Education during its meeting on Thursday.

The point appears to be moot, however, as the presidents reportedly asked to have the item removed from Thursday's agenda.

Vailas, in Boise for meetings this week, said Tuesday morning that tuition was simply going to be an item of discussion, adding that plans to increase fees have yet to even be drawn out.

"That's in development with students, faculty and staff. We're not even close," he said. "We don't know what the level of the increase is. It's very premature at this point, and everybody is looking at all things."

According to a story from the Idaho Statesman on Tuesday, however, Boise State University President Bob Kustra said Tuesday afternoon that the four presidents asked to have the tuition discussion removed from Thursday's agenda.

ISU tuition, which is \$2,332 per semester for full-time instate residents, most recently increased by 6 percent last spring after the State Board of Education scaled back an initial proposal of 7 percent from the university.

The tuition talks also come after an additional 3 percent state budget holdback that Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter announced on Monday.

ISU, which made a 1 percent holdback in September, will cut nearly \$3 million in spending this year while it will reserve another 2 percent, or \$1.4 million, for what is virtually a 6 percent holdback.

During a monthly open forum Monday, Vailas told faculty the university will look to boost enrollment and seek more funds from the private sector in order to increase revenue.

The cuts will keep the university from purchasing equipment such as new computers and strengthens an "increased scrutiny" plan that was announced during an open forum last month.

Some details of ISU's plan include additional scrutiny of vacated positions, which average about 70 in any given month, and cutting back on travel costs.

Vailas also addressed the state's "rainy" day funds, which are made up of three separate accounts. They include a \$140.6 million Budget Stabilization Fund, a \$60.7 million Economic Recovery Fund and a Public Education Stabilization Fund that began the year with about \$114 million.

"We're hoping that politically (the 'rainy' day funds) are still open," Vailas said.

FaSt Facts

Idaho State University's tuition per semester is \$2,332 for full-time in-state residents and \$6,934 for out-of-state residents.

## **Home school reform sought by lawmaker**

BY CASEY SANTEE  
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POCATELLO — During a school board meeting Monday, Patti Mortensen recalled the story of a student who left kindergarten to be home-schooled and returned several years later unable to do basic reading or arithmetic.

Mortensen, School District 25 director of elementary education, called on lawmakers in attendance to add a definition for “educational neglect” to Idaho code during the upcoming state legislative session.

Doing so, she said, would open the door for child protective services and the courts to address the issue.

Rep. Donna Boe, D-Pocatello, told school officials that while at a governors conference regarding at-risk youth a few years ago, she learned that as many as 13,000 Idaho children are not enrolled in public or private schools.

She said unlike Washington and Oregon, the Gem State does not require parents home-schooling their children to register with the State Department of Education or the local school district.

“I know homeschoolers feel very strongly about their independence,” Boe said. “If they would just say, ‘This year I would love to educate my kid at home,’ we could provide them with the materials.”

Boe added that she also knows stories of parents who do an excellent job homeschooling their children. The problem, she said, is there is no safety net in Idaho's law for children who don't receive quality education at home.

Boe said it is understandable that District 25 is concerned about the issue. She said that home-schooled students who fall significantly behind their peers enter adulthood with several strikes against them, including problems finding employment. She said they can also develop social deficits because they are raised in seclusion.

Boe recalled the story of a woman who home-schooled her five children. She said the woman did a decent job with the oldest few, but when the youngest child was 11, he still couldn't write his own name.

“It's tragic for that child and for society,” Boe said.

She said the biggest reason Idaho hasn't defined educational neglect is because home-schoolers have a strong state lobby that is resistant to efforts that could encroach upon their activities.

## **ISU touts info security program**

\$1.2 million federal grant provides scholarships for institute enrollees

BY YANN RANAIVO

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POCATELLO—Corey Schou compared building information systems with building a home during a conference in South Korea earlier this fall.

He said both need to have a secure structure before being fully constructed.

Schou, the associate dean of Idaho State University's College of Business and director of his department's Informatics Research Institute, visited Seoul, Korea, in October before traveling to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the following month on a trip that was partly aimed at recruiting more Middle Eastern and Asian students to ISU.

Schou addressed security experts in both nations and referred to the IRI, which is a interdisciplinary program the Idaho State Board of Education established about five years ago to conduct research in computer security, among other disciplines.

Schou said during his visit to Seoul he advised security experts about increasing security for computer systems and was the keynote speaker during the inauguration of a new information security center at King Saud University in Riyadh.

"I think we're going to be working very closely with King Saud University," Schou said, adding that a number of students who formerly attended the Saudi Arabian school have enrolled at ISU.

Schou's recent trips came in light of a four-year \$1.2 million grant that the IRI received from the National Science Foundation. ISU received half of the grant last month and will use the NSF funds to provide scholarships for IRI enrollees.

One portion of IRI enrolls both undergraduate and graduate students into a two-year program focused on computer security training.

Schou said IRI students must complete both their regular coursework and his program's curriculum in order to graduate. The IRI also requires its graduates to sign a two-year contract with a federal agency, which employ the recruits in information security.

Schou noted the IRI's prestige in training security expert and said many of its participants chose to attend ISU because of the program.

"Our guys are stronger and broader than people who are in other programs," he said, adding that several nationwide school specializing in information technology compete with ISU to recruit students. "People don't think about ISU working with other big schools. ... And we don't compete with them. They compete with us."

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

**Growing pains**

POST REGISTER

School District 93 wants to meet with the public to explain why the \$25 million bond it wants is critical.

Bonneville Joint School District 93 plans to host a get-together Thursday to inform you how it would spend the \$25 million it's asking for Dec. 10.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. at Rocky Mountain Middle School, 3443 N. Ammon Road.

District officials say the \$25 million bond is critical to helping them keep up with growth.

Enrollment districtwide is up 4.5 percent this year, and enrollment is expected to double by 2018. The area's growing so fast, district officials say, the bond won't affect property tax rates.

If voters approve the bond, the district would use the \$25 million to build an elementary school and make a host of improvements across the district, including:

- The purchase of new library books and textbooks.
- Installation of metal roofs at Ucon and Tiebreaker elementaries.
- Purchasing 10 new school buses.
- Renovation, upgrades and expansion of existing school facilities.
- Upgrade of science facilities at secondary schools.
- Various safety and security upgrades throughout the district.
- Completing a number of technology projects and upgrades.
- Purchasing land for future school sites.